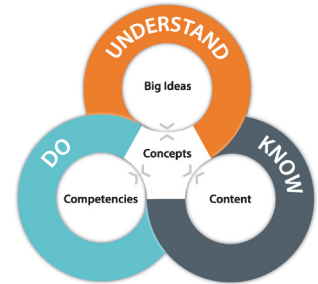


## Hanukkah Dreidel Game

This lesson uses the Jewish dreidel – a four-sided spinning top with a symbol on each side – to explore ideas and emotional responses related to gambling. Dreidel is a game typically played during Hanukkah, a Jewish eight-day “festival of lights” that usually takes place during the month of December. During Hanukkah there is a nightly lighting of a menorah, special foods are eaten, special prayers and blessings are recited, and many games are played in celebration of the holiday.

This lesson exposes students to a cultural celebration that they may not yet be familiar with, offers students a chance to express themselves through art, and provides them with the opportunity to self-reflect and better identify and understand their reactions to gambling situations.





### The Game


The word “dreidel” means “to turn around” in Yiddish. The four symbols on the dreidel represent the phrase *Nes gadol haya sham*, which translates to “A great miracle occurred there.” (Note: Dreidels used in Israel have a different last letter that translates into “A great miracle occurred here.”)


The game is typically played with one dreidel and some coins, nuts, or other small pieces of currency. On each of the four sides of the dreidel is written one of the letters: *nun*, *gimmel*, *hey*, and *shin*. Each word represents a different action (see below). Each player gets the same amount of currency to begin. Players sit in a circle. All players spin the dreidel, and the highest spin gets to go first—*Nun* is highest, then *gimmel*, *hey*, and *shin*. (Note: If there is a tie for the highest spin, those players get to spin again.)

To begin, all players put one unit of currency into a pot. In a clockwise direction, players take turns spinning the dreidel. If the dreidel lands on:

 **Nun** Nothing happens. *Nun* represents the word “zero.” The next player spins the dreidel.

 **Gimmel** The player takes all the winnings in the pot! Once the currency in the pot has been taken by the *Gimmel* spinner, all players put another unit into the now-empty pot, including the person who spun *Gimmel*. *Gimmel* represents the word “whole.”

 **Hey** The player takes half of the pot. (If there is an odd amount of units in the pot, leave the odd unit in the pot.) *Hey* represents the word “half.”

 **Shin** The player puts a unit into the pot. *Shin* represents the word “give.”



To make the game go faster, you can raise the amount of units put in when a player spins *Shin*, and/or increase the post-*Gimmel* contribution to two, three, or more units per player.

When a player can no longer contribute any units after landing on *Shin*, or after another player lands on *Gimmel*, they are out of the game. The game is over when there is only one player left with all of the pot.

## Instructional Strategies

1. Describe the dreidel game and explain how to play it.
2. Split the class into groups of 5 or 6 students. Hand out an equal amount of currency to each player (chocolate coins, tokens, etc.). Play the game until there is a winner in each group.
3. After playing, have a class discussion about the activity.
  - a. How did you like playing the game? What did you like most/least about playing?
  - b. How did it feel to win the pot when you spun *Gimmel*? How did it feel when you spun *Shin* and had to put a (coin) into the pot?
  - c. Would you play this dreidel game again? Why or why not? What if real money was used? Would you feel differently if playing with your own money? Explain.
  - d. What are some things we can do to manage our emotions when we're playing games?
4. Ask the class to share any games they might play in their cultural celebrations that have winning and losing or that use money. Consider asking students if they would like to introduce the games in following lessons.

5. **Art activity.** Have students draw/paint a picture or create a dance about how they felt when they were playing the game. This could be after winning a pot, after winning the whole game, after they ran out of currency and lost the game, or another time related to winning or losing.

## Gambling literacy

### Big ideas

- ✓ Every human society appears to have accepted gambling, legal or otherwise, in some form or another
- ✓ Gambling can be a fun recreational activity but can also lead to significant harm
- ✓ As humans, both individually and as communities, we need to learn how to manage gambling in our midst
- ✓ We can learn how to control gambling by examining the different ways people have thought about it, engaging in critical self-reflection and listening to each other

### Competencies

- ✓ Assess the complex ways in which gambling is linked to human culture and impacts the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and societies
- ✓ Recognize binary constructs (e.g., win vs lose or success vs failure) and assess their limitation in addressing complex social issues like gambling
- ✓ Explore and appreciate the diverse cognitive, social, emotional and physical factors that impact gambling behaviour



For a complete look at the gambling literacy competencies, as defined by the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, see: <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/assets/docs/iminds/hs-gambling-curriculum.pdf>

## Links to Curriculum

### First Peoples' principles of learning

- ✓ Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)
- ✓ Learning requires exploration of one's identity
- ✓ Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story

### Social Studies K/1/2/3

#### Big ideas

- ✓ Stories and traditions about ourselves and our families reflect who we are and where we are from
- ✓ Our communities are diverse and made of individuals who have a lot in common
- ✓ People from diverse cultures and societies share some common experiences and aspects of life

#### Competencies

- ✓ Identify fair and unfair aspects of events, decisions, or actions (in their lives) and consider appropriate courses of action (ethical judgment)
- ✓ Recognize causes and consequences of events, decisions, or developments (in their lives) (causes and consequence)
- ✓ Make value judgments about events, decisions, or actions, and suggest lessons that can be learned (ethical judgment)
- ✓ Explain why people, events, or places are significant to various individuals and groups (significance)

### Art K/1/2/3

#### Big ideas

- ✓ People create art to express who they are as individuals and community
- ✓ Dance, drama, music, and visual arts express meaning in unique ways
- ✓ People connect to others and share ideas through the arts
- ✓ Engagement in the arts creates opportunities for inquiry through purposeful play
- ✓ Creative expression develops our unique identity and voice

#### Competencies

- ✓ Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual, using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play
- ✓ Reflect on creative processes and make connections to other experiences
- ✓ Express feelings, ideas, stories, observations, and experiences through the arts
- ✓ Explore artistic expressions of themselves and community through creative processes
- ✓ Explore personal experience, community, and culture through arts activities
- ✓ Express feelings, ideas, and experiences in creative ways

This resource was developed by the **Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research** with funding provided by the **BC Responsible & Problem Gambling Program**. Any views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the BC Responsible & Problem Gambling Program or the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research.